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1983 UNITED NATIONS PLEDGING CONFERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 9 November 1983, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. OM PRADHAN (Bhutan)

CONTENTS

Statements regarding pledges (continued)

Adoption and signature of the Final Act

Closure of the Conference

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

STATEMENTS REGARDING PLEDGES (continued)

1. The representative of MADAGASCAR announced the following supplementary contributions by his Government: voluntary contributions to UNDP, 8,048,400 FMG; regular contributions, 90,060,000 FMG; contributions to local expenses, $71,250; to UNFPA, $5,000; to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, $2,000; and to a fund for technical assistance and co-operation, $2,500.

2. The representative of MOROCCO said that his country's contribution to UNDP, which had risen by 5 per cent, was 1,674,250 dirhams.

3. The representative of the CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC announced that his Government had already contributed 5 million CFA francs (the equivalent of $13,055) to UNDP and that, when the economic situation permitted, it would contribute to the other United Nations operational activities.

4. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that his delegation could not yet announce its pledges because they had not yet been approved by the Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran; as soon as that requirement was met, he would inform the Secretariat of the amounts.

ADOPTION AND SIGNATURE OF THE FINAL ACT (A/CONF.122/L.1)

5. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Conference wished to adopt its Final Act (A/CONF.112/L.1). He invited the participants to sign the Final Act.

6. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director of UNICEF) said that 87 Governments had announced pledges totalling $111 million to the general resources of UNICEF for 1984, which represented an increase of 2.7 per cent over 1983. In addition, $5 million had been pledged for specific purpose contributions.

7. A number of Governments had been unable to announce their pledges but it was estimated that nearly $100 million more were likely to be pledged in the months ahead, which would bring the total pledges to general resources for 1984 to some $207 million, or 4 to 5 per cent more than currently expected for 1983. To those figures should be added anticipated non-governmental contributions to the general resources of UNICEF from the National Committees, from the sale of greeting cards and from non-governmental organizations, which together would amount to some $40 million for 1984, a modest increase over 1983.

8. It should be pointed out that despite the difficult economic conditions, many developing countries had maintained their contributions to UNICEF and in 29 cases increased them. Five major donors had very substantially increased their contributions and he expressed his appreciation particularly to the Governments which had pledged significant increases - of 10 per cent or more - in their total contributions. Among industrialized countries, those were the Federal Republic of

Germany, Finland, France, Norway, Spain and Switzerland, and, among developing countries, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uganda and Viet Nam. Other Governments, for various reasons, had not been in a position to make pledges. Among them was the United States, which had increased its contribution to the general resources of UNICEF to $42.5 million in 1983, and Japan, which had increased its contribution by 24 per cent in 1983. He also expressed appreciation to those Governments which had advanced the dates of their payments, a critically important factor for the liquidity of UNICEF.

9. He expressed deep appreciation to the countries participating in the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations which, as in the two previous years, had made a significant contribution to UNICEF. He also expressed his thanks to the Government of Italy, which had maintained the high level of support to UNICEF of 1982 and 1983.

10. Leading experts in the children's field agreed that the world was witnessing the early stages of what was potentially a revolution in children's survival and well-being, the result of a number of scientific and social advances in the last few years and, in large measure, of the efforts of many organizations within the United Nations system. And yet, at such a favourable point, UNICEF found itself with no significant real increase in its available resources in 1984 as compared with 1983. Furthermore, the world recession was causing many Governments to cut back expenditure on the social sectors. The experience of UNICEF, however, had shown that in spite of the recession poor countries could do much that was realistic and economically feasible; they could, in particular, restructure their health and educational systems, concentrating on low-cost and highly effective activities directed to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. That was an important aspect of the work of UNICEF.

11. He appealed to those Governments which had announced a reduction in the real value of their pledges to reconsider and make a supplementary contribution to the general resources of UNICEF for 1984. Despite serious economic difficulties at home, many other Governments had found it possible to maintain and even substantially increase their contributions. He himself repeated UNICEF's pledge to make the most of the resources pledged by sharpening the efficiency of its work and maximizing the effectiveness of its programmes.

12. Mr. SALAS (Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities) said that 71 Governments had announced pledges to UNFPA for 1984 amounting to about $70 million.

13. He especially appreciated the pledges that represented an increase of 10 per cent or more over the previous year. Adding the pledges made and the pledges anticipated from those traditional donors to UNFPA which had not yet been in a position to announce them officially, the total estimated income for the Fund for 1984 would amount to approximately $134 million, which fell short of covering the $138.2 million set by the Governing Council for UNFPA.

(Mr. Salas)

14. It was essential for countries to pay their contributions as early as possible, in order to ensure regular and systematic programming and payment.

15. It should be noted that 1984 would be an especially important year for UNFPA, since in August the International Conference on Population was to be held in Mexico, with the primary objective of evaluating the efforts of developing countries in the field of population. In that connection, he thanked two countries - Syria and Belgium - which had announced 1984 pledges to that Conference and he was pleased to report that Nigeria had contributed $100,000 for the same purpose.

16. Important advances in the field of population had begun to be made, as reflected in the rate of growth of the world's population, which had been 1.7 per cent instead of the 2 per cent anticipated, with an expected drop to 1.5 per cent in the year 2000.

17. Mr. ABDEL-MEGHID (Director, Liaison Office of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that 61 countries had pledged over $13 million to the development fund, an increase of 20 per over the previous year; he hoped that the figure would be even higher when pledges from countries which had not yet announced them were made known. It was hoped that, with the increase in contributions, the capacity of the Fund would be strengthened as a source of financing for many programmes of specialized technical co-operation in the field of industrialization which required support from UNIDO.

18. Mr. DI GENNARO (United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC)) said that the pledges made at the Conference, which represented only part of the financial resources provided by member countries and other donors to UNFDAC, were an encouraging indicator. So far, pledges had been made of general contributions amounting to $2,785,000 and special purpose contributions of $43,666,000, which would be used over a period of five years. The figures mentioned, and in particular the special purpose contributions, were unprecedented and would enable the Fund to implement Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/14 in the Andean subregion where a broad programme of coca control could be initiated.

19. UNFDAC was now in a position to consider new and more effective activities in regions of the world where the lack of resources and problems of drug abuse were closely linked. It was hoped that the firm commitment and generous contributions of some countries would encourage many other countries to consider the great value of a multilateral approach in that particular sphere of international assistance.

20. Mr. DOO KINGUE (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) expressed appreciation to Afghanistan, Burundi, Congo, Spain and Zambia for having contributed to UNITAR for the first time; he also expressed appreciation for the considerable increases in contributions from China, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy and Norway.

(Mr. Doo Kinqua)

21. In his recent statement to the Second Committee of the General Assembly, he had said that the current system of financing UNITAR, based on voluntary contributions, should be given another chance before proposals were made to change it. However, on the basis of the contributions announced during the Conference, it seemed that the appeal made for more member States to contribute more generously to UNITAR had not really been understood.

22. Although 34 member States had made pledges in 1983 compared with 30 in the previous year, the proportion in relation to the 158 States Members of the United Nations was still too small. In all, the pledges made would exceed those of the previous year by one third, since total contributions amounted to $1,044,760.

23. The contributions announced constituted a third of the objective formulated by the Board of Trustees of UNITAR as the minimum budget for 1984 without which the Institute would not be able to carry out its activities in a responsible manner. He therefore hoped that the countries that had not been able to announce their voluntary contributions for 1984, including the United States which had provided $422,000 for the UNITAR budget for 1983, would do so before the Board of Trustees approved the budget for 1984 in March of that year. Otherwise there would be a significant reduction in the Institute's resources which would force UNITAR, against its wishes, to recommend to the General Assembly formulas for financing which it had so far rejected.

24. Mr. MORSE (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme) said that for the fourth consecutive year the total resources pledged to UNDP had fallen below the level of voluntary contributions for 1980. Despite the efforts made by UNDP and the indications of economic recovery among a number of donor countries, the results in terms of US dollars were less than encouraging. On the basis of the pledges announced for 1984 by 95 countries and three territories of the 119 countries and territories represented at the Conference, and of estimates of the contributions of Governments which had not yet made pledges, voluntary contributions to UNDP in 1984 would amount to $681.1 million, which represented an increase of about 1 per cent compared with 1983. However, in the national currencies in which most contributions were pledged, the results were more encouraging. A considerable number of countries had responded positively to the recommendation made by the UNDP Governing Council in decision 83/5 that all Governments should try to maintain the real value of their contributions as a minimum objective. It should be noted that the adverse effect of variations in exchange rates on the real value of contributions to UNDP was partly offset by the relative increase in the purchasing power of assistance provided by UNDP, which was calculated on the basis of convertible dollars in local currency.

25. Only 24 countries had met or exceeded, in US dollars, the target of a 14 per cent annual increase in their contributions which had been established by the UNDP Governing Council. Moreover, four donor coutries (Finland, France, Italy and Spain, whose increase of 86 per cent deserved special recognition) and 28 developing coutries had met or exceeded that objective in national currency. He also stressed the generous contributions made by Denmark in recent years and

(Mr. Morse)

expressed appreciation for the great efforts made by many developing countries to increase their contributions even though they had not been able to achieve the growth target. It was estimated that of the 18 major donors whose contributions accounted for approximately 90 per cent of total programme resources, 10 had so far met the minimum recommendation to maintain the level of their contributions in real terms. If the other donor countries did not follow suit, the Governing Council would have to face some very difficult decisions at its mid-cycle review in 1984.

26. He was convinced that, although some donors had not met the minimum recommendation, the decisions of the Council had produced positive results at the Conference. He noted once again that the central resources of UNDP provided an essential operational base from which the 10 special purpose development funds and activities and the entire range of operational activities of the United Nations system were assisted, and expressed the hope that the signs of economic recovery in many developed countries and the stabilization of exchange rates would mean extended recovery for UNDP's resource base. Moreover, no real correlation could be established between the pledges made or estimated for UNDP in 1984 and the process of the economic recovery of the donor countries. For example, Finland, France, Italy and Spain, which were still suffering from the effects of the economic crisis, had increased their contributions in real terms considerably more than other countries whose economies were in a better situation.

27. He urged the Governments which, because of their budgetary procedures, had not yet had sufficient time to respond to the recommendation made in decision 83/5 of the Governing Council, to respond urgently to that recommendation within the financial year or in any manner envisaged in that decision to enable them to provide funds for the Programme's resource base.

28. Since the previous meeting of the Governing Council in June, UNDP had issued a compendium of some 440 projects in need of co-financing in the amount of almost $500 million spread among 70 developing countries and territories and including 11 regional projects. Six donor countries had already responded to the need for additional financing for various of those projects. He urged other Governments to address the urgent and unfulfilled needs of developing countries and to transfer to UNDP the unspent resources from their bilateral assistance programmes in order to strengthen UNDP's central resource base, as called for in decision 83/5.

29. In the mid-cycle review of UNDP-supported technical co-operation scheduled for June, 1984, the indicative planning figures for many countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa would have to undergo far-reaching changes since they had been provisionally allocated in 1980 for the 1982-1986 period. Recession, indebtedness, declining living standards, drought and other problems affecting those countries pointed to the need for a rational, responsive and massive effort by the international community, which only systematic, forward-planned development endeavours such as UNDP could provide.

(Mr. Morse)

30. Although those changing circumstances had added to the need for higher funding levels, other changes had worked in favour of UNDP. For example, since 1980, UNDP had lost almost $730 million in the conversion into United States dollars of contributions made in national currencies. The picture was improving, however, as a result of gains for some donor country currencies and it was hoped that that trend would be maintained. On the basis of pledges made for 1984, UNDP would continue its programming level at 55 per cent. However, unless an increase of at least 7.5 per cent was attained for 1985 and 1986, that level could not be maintained.

31. The funds administered by UNDP were also facing serious resource constraints. The Special Measures Fund for Least Developed Countries had received from the Conference pledges of $14.5 million compared to $13.7 million in 1983. In view of the special responsibilities of that Fund under the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, and the positive attitude of some donor countries, it was hoped that further contributions would be forthcoming. In the case of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, contributions for 1984 amounted to $18.9 million, compared to $24.3 million in 1983; the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration had received pledges of $113,000, compared to $2.1 million from six countries for 1983; the Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities had received pledges in the amount of $645,000, compared to $600,000 in 1983; the Special Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Volunteers programme, $916,000 for 1984, compared to $1 million in 1983; the United Nations Special Fund for Land-locked Developing Countries, $50,000, compared to $63,000 in 1983; the UNDP-Energy Account, $500,000 for 1984, compared to $1.3 million in 1983; contributions to the United Nations Financing System for Science and Technology for Development amounted to $241,000. It was hoped that Governments would give special consideration to the enormous needs and potential of that relatively new component of the United Nations development system. Those Funds all had worthy purposes, but were beset by the same resource constraints as UNDP.

32. The results of the last session of the UNDP Governing Council had signalled a new beginning for UNDP. After extended deliberations concerning the recommendations of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole, the Council had provided UNDP with new tools for greater effectiveness and for obtaining new resources for its operational responsibilities. There could be no real change, however, without the participation of all countries. The Pledging Conference had been the first official test of that participation and he hoped that support would increase in the future, to achieve the resource base necessary for the effective performance of UNDP's activities.

33. Mrs. PASTIZZI-FERENIC (United Nations Trust Fund for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) said the Institute had received pledges of $511,678 from 18 countries. She thanked those countries which had contributed generously as well as those which had made modest contributions as a token of their support. Research and training were fundamental to the achievement of development objectives and the Institute would continue working towards the goal of the full integration of women into the development process.

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34. Mrs. SNYDER (Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women) said that the Fund paid particular attention to an invisible labour force: the rural and poor urban women who were major contributors to the economic life of their countries. She thanked the six new contributors, all of them developing countries (Afghanistan, Algeria, Guinea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Zaire and Zambia) for their support, as well as the other donors. Thirty-five countries had pledged a total of $1.7 million, a 42 per cent increase over the previous year. A review of the work of the Fund was under way and a complete register of the governmental and non-governmental activities supported by the Fund, would be ready by mid-1984. She hoped that that review would strengthen the confidence already manifested by donors and lead to an increase in the resources offered to the Fund in the future.

35. Mr. OKALI (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)) thanked the 33 Governments which had pledged a total of $1.2 million, especially those which had continuously supported the Centre, and those which had increased their contributions for 1983. He hoped that former donors which had not yet announced their pledges would do so in the near future. The Centre was a small organization in terms of the resources which it administered. However, it had a broad mandate and in its five years of existence, it had used its funds prudently and had achieved a good cost/effectiveness ratio.

36. The CHAIRMAN reported on the pledges not yet announced by the respective organizations; United Nations Environment Programme, $3,018,715; United Nations Trust Fund for the Transport and Communications Decade for Africa, $21,544; Trust Fund for the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, $427,170; United Nations Trust Fund for Social Defence, $441,494; United Nations Trust Fund for African Development Activities, $31,351; United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging, $21,673; United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons, $20,755.

37. Since, for different reasons, many delegations had not yet been able to announce their pledges, it was not possible to evaluate the results of the Conference. He urged all potential donors to announce their pledges as soon as possible and those who had already announced theirs, to make their remittances as early as possible in order to facilitate proper planning and resource management.

38. The CHAIRMAN declared closed the 1983 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.